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## THE PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EXPERT

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The vast sums of money invested in the property of our higher institutions of learning, and the millions paid out annually for salaries come directly or indirectly from the public's resources.

If the trustee of material wealth is under obligation to employ his means for human betterment, the trustee of specialized information is surely under equal obligation to so use or disseminate his information as to make it of service to society at large. The general acceptance of this fundamental social obligation has made a society out of twentieth century individuals.

The old axiom that the best teaching is in the doing is as sound for the university or college professor as for the kindergartener. Those teach best who have learned what they would teach at least in part from practical experience. The wizened pedagogue of tradition is yielding place to the teacher who through practical contacts has a sense of human and social values. The most effective teaching in that field of thought which is social and useful is conditioned upon practical contacts with the world of affairs. Such contacts are particularly indispensable in modern university life.

The dependence of the college and the university upon the public for such financial resources as are necessary to carry on their work constitute the superficial, and the possibility of improving the quality of college and university teaching by the fulfillment of a social obligation furnishes the real reason for making available to the public the services and specialized knowledge of the college and university expert.

### THE OBLIGATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The obligation of public service is now generally accepted by and for at least two of the professional groups in the university circle: the professors of education and medicine. That the depart-

ment of education should be a practical department with training classes is universally recognized in normal schools and is coming to be quite generally accepted in universities. Through conferences on city and rural educational programs, through lectures, through consultations with teachers, through special bulletins and through practical teaching work, the instructors in this department have rendered increasing public service. And with what definite results in better university teaching, in the reorganization of curricula and in the better coördination of our educational system, the educational progress of the last decade bears golden witness!

No tribute to the self-effacing, community-making spirit of twentieth century men is more inspiring than the work of the medical fraternities in their willingness to put community health before individual health. The ideal of a generation ago—the family doctor—has given away through the work of the profession itself to the community doctor. For in stamping out the sources of disease the physician has thinned his own ranks and lessened his own income. And among physicians none has done this work more nobly as a rule than the medical faculties of our universities.

More than this, in these two professions, the general standard now is that no one should have the nerve to teach or be allowed to teach who is not in practical touch with his source material: the child or the school room; the patient or the laboratory.

Other groups in our universities feel that these same standards and these same high tests should now be applied to their teaching and to their research work. As usual in such movements the younger men at least are already pushing their standards toward these ideals. Daily more abundant grows the evidence that the spirit of real service is touching the professions of law and of engineering. But it is particularly with the group of social scientists—the economists, the sociologists and the political scientists—that this paper has to do.

In the group of social scientists the first real need is for practical coöperation with public officials or others concerned with the expert's specialities. The National Association of Urban Universities exists in part in order to give national expression to the desire of the university officials and university teachers for closer coöperation between university experts and the representatives of the public whether they be public officials or officers or members of civic as-

sociations. The value of this service to the university and to the specialist is thus recognized.

### APPARENT DIFFICULTIES

But this recognition does not mean that there are not certain difficulties to be overcome before this type of coöperation can find its best and fullest fruition. These difficulties, however, are of such a nature as to disappear when clearly understood and frankly stated. They center about the fact that these sciences are necessarily very closely related to current "political" problems and "party" issues; though it must be at once obvious that herein lies their chief value to the student who is to become the business man of the future.

It has been urged that this relation may lead to two regrettable tendencies: first, that the university use its experts solely in that way and for that purpose which it is hoped will attract income, and second, that the party leaders will ask for the coöperation of the university expert not with the thought that the services of that expert may prove valuable or his advice be taken but solely in order that the university's name and prestige may thus in a nominal way be put back of a given political movement. It has been held that there lurk in both these tendencies grave dangers to the scholarship in and to the integrity of America's higher educational institutions.

But merely to state these presumed difficulties is to be sufficiently entrenched against them. Certain ethical standards will maintain scholarship while keeping that scholarship wholesome and effective. Those university experts particularly who wish to render service to the public or to public officials can adopt certain ethical standards comparable to the ethical standards adopted by the lawyers, engineers and physicians,—ethical standards that will safeguard both their institutions and themselves. These ethical standards can be reduced to five:

### PROPOSED ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR COÖPERATING EXPERTS

FIRST. *The work done for public officials should be as carefully and as thoroughly done—with indications as to sources and nature of the material—as would a monograph prepared for a scientific journal.*

The expert, moreover, should indicate all the available sources of material and if the data presented in any of those sources are at

variance with the facts presented, or with the conclusions reached, the degree of reliability of the facts or conclusions in such sources should be clearly stated. All of these principles will be adopted by any scholar as a matter of course.

SECOND. *The expert should segregate his conclusions or recommendations as clearly as possible from his facts.*

Many times, no doubt, it is as much the judgment of the expert that the official desires as his facts. Indeed that expert whose judgment is not sound will have little hearing before the average public official. But the report should be so framed that the conclusions can fall without involving the integrity of the facts.

THIRD. *While this matter is before the public official or up for public consideration the expert who drew up the report should refrain from any public discussion of it.*

It must be assumed that the public official who asks for this kind of coöperation from the university expert will have the privilege, or, if the reputation of the university or expert or city is at stake, assume the responsibility for printing in full the expert's report. This report ought then to speak for itself. There should be no occasion for this particular expert to go about the city or state urging its adoption or publicly discussing it. It is not to be assumed that the expert is at once the official adviser and the advocate who will persuade the community to agree to what he recommends to the public official. This division of duties will safeguard all parties concerned: the public official from having to disagree with the public recommendations of his expert; the expert from having to appear to be urging the adoption of his own advice; the university or college from appearing to "take sides" officially in controverted matters. We could not expect an attorney to take the stump against his client nor should we expect the client to use his position to discredit the attorney. The expert's opinion once made and amply supported must be assumed to be solely for adoption or rejection by the public official.

FOURTH. *The college or university expert should reserve at all times the full right to enter into public discussion of any matter whatsoever other than the particular matter referred to above.*

Unless American professors wish to alienate themselves from public usefulness, their right to take part in public affairs as do other citizens will have to be most carefully preserved and protected

at whatever cost. Not to do so is to nullify completely the good that will come from coöperation between public officials and college or university experts; not to do so is to make impossible the socialization of the specialized knowledge and services of these experts. Without this right the professor is put into the class of the third American sex having—and deserving—the contempt of all.

FIFTH. *The chief purpose of practical work by the college or university expert is to assure better teaching.*

Good teaching! This is one quality which students, parents and public must demand. The best teaching particularly in the social sciences will usually be by the teacher who has the practical contacts necessary to make a man of action rather than a man of straw. Neither can there be good teaching when all or a major portion of one's energies go for research, or for that matter into public service. The clear recognition that first and foremost the business of the university teacher is to teach will prevent many an awkward situation for all parties concerned.

#### OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

The above has to do particularly with the practical coöperating work of the expert in social, economic and political science whether in coöperation with public officials or groups of citizens or expressed in other ways. There is still another method of socializing the knowledge of the university expert and that is through popular lectures, books, magazine articles and newspaper stories. The chief obstacles here lie within the traditions of the profession itself. One of these traditions is that the written output of the professor should be stupid and useless to all save other university professors who have to read their printed pages in order to "keep up with the literature." The phrases accepted by the profession for expressing this idea are that these works should be "scientific" and "scholarly," as though that meant that they could not as well be lucid and humanly interesting. The result is the lack of the ability or the desire to so state learned truths that he who runs may read. Or perhaps if simply stated many learned social "norms" would turn out to be simple (and therefore valuable) folklore. But given practical contacts, the college or university professor will soon master the means of humanizing technical knowledge.

This socializing of the specialized knowledge of the university

expert does not assume that the university professor has some special gifts from on high that need but translation to be of benefit to the "lower classes." It means that each science has its own phrases with an exact meaning only to those accustomed to them. It means that human limitations make it easier for the expert to slide along in well worn grooves. It means, of course, that technical phrases must be used in standard technical works. It also means, however, that good teaching and good work and better social and institutional standards will all be furthered by at least a greater effort to put the conclusions of scientific scholarship into simple lucid language with homely illustrations.

It is not that other people perish for want of the knowledge of the university expert—though this has actually happened in too many cases; death itself has too often come from the want of popular knowledge of what is commonplace to the expert. But for his own growth and development the university expert must be enticed out of the institutionalism that occasionally enmeshes him. Nor is it necessary that all yield to this enticement; a bare 20 per cent will suffice.

Better teaching and better human beings for both the teacher and the taught are in this movement for the greater public service of the college and university expert.